

Wondering:

I wonder how it feels to stop striving and simply let ourselves be carried by God's joy.

Connecting the readings

Truth and Consequence (Jeremiah)

Human societies can be skilled in destruction - ecological collapse, war, inequality.

Creation bears the scars of our injustice.

Grace and Joy (Luke)

God refuses to abandon even one life. Repentance is being carried home, not moral heroics.

Joy is central: heaven rejoices when the lost are restored.

Holding The Readings Together

Jeremiah calls us to lament truthfully: to name collapse, mourn creation, confess folly. Luke reminds us that lament is not God's last word. God still searches, still rejoices. The heartbeat of faith is to live in this tension: truth-telling with Jeremiah, rejoicing with Luke.

Question:

How can our communities hold together honest lament for the world's brokenness with genuine joy in God's restoring love?

Wondering:

I wonder what it would look like if our worship and daily lives carried both Jeremiah's grief and Luke's rejoicing in the same heartbeat.

Overview summary

Jeremiah paints a picture of desolation: a hot wind, a ruined earth, creation in mourning. Luke, by contrast, tells of a shepherd rejoicing over a lost sheep and a woman celebrating a recovered coin. One speaks of devastation, the other of joy. Yet both describe the human condition – our capacity for folly and for being found – and God's passionate involvement in our lives.

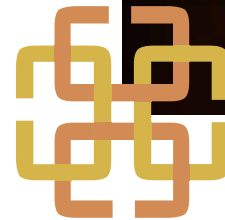
Wondering

- What does it mean for us personally to stop striving and instead allow ourselves to be "found"
- Do we grumble like the Pharisees when the marginalised are restored, or do we join in heaven's joy
- How might lament and celebration belong together in our worship and witness

A Prayer

God of truth and joy,
You mourn when creation
is scarred by human folly,
And you rejoice when
the lost are found.
Teach us to lament honestly,
to repent humbly, and to
celebrate abundantly, that our
lives may echo your heartbeat –
grieving with Jeremiah,
rejoicing with Luke,
until all creation is restored
in your love.
Amen.

Photo: Andriyko Podilnyk



HeartBeat

From Mourning to Joy

Sunday 14th of September

Lectionary Reading:

Luke 15:1-10;
Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28

Opening Prayer

God of wind and whisper,
You speak in the
hot wind of judgement
and in the gentle joy of restoration.
Open our ears to hear your truth,
open our hearts
to receive your mercy,
and open our lives
to embody your joy.
As we read Jeremiah,
teach us to lament with honesty.
As we hear Luke,
teach us to rejoice with heaven.
Hold us in the tension
of mourning and joy,
and let your Spirit guide
our study and our living.
Amen.

Introduction

Today we bring together two very different voices of scripture. Jeremiah shows us a world unravelled - a hot wind too fierce to cleanse, a land wasted, creation itself mourning because of human folly and injustice. He names the collapse that comes when people are "skilled in doing evil but do not know how to do good." Yet even in the midst of devastation, God's covenant promise remains: "I will not make a full end."

Luke, by contrast, gives us two brief parables that overflow with joy: a shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine to search for one lost sheep, and a woman who turns her house upside down until she finds her missing coin. Both end not with quiet relief but with loud rejoicing, neighbours gathered, heaven itself celebrating.

These two readings may seem far apart - lament and joy, collapse and celebration - but together they reveal the heartbeat of faith. God calls us to face honestly the brokenness of our world, yet never without hope. God also invites us to join the dance of heaven, where even one restored life brings joy.

Listening to the Texts

Jeremiah 4:11–12, 22–28 :

Read this twice.

What words, phrases or ideas have caught your attention?
The Harsh Wind of Judgement: key phrases . Which of these phrases capture your attention or are words you wish to talk about?

- A "hot wind" blows, not to cleanse but to devastate.
- The people are "skilled in doing evil, but do not know how to do good."
- Creation itself mourns: land wasted, birds fled, mountains trembling.
- Yet God insists: "I will not make a full end."

Jeremiah names the truth of collapse. Injustice unravels creation. Yet the vision is not final; God's covenant still allows for hope.

Question:

Where do we see signs today of human skill in destruction - ecological damage, economic exploitation, or social division - and how might we learn again "how to do good"?

Wondering:

I wonder what it means to live faithfully in a world where creation itself mourns - holding together both the grief of collapse and the hope that God will not make a full end.

Luke 15:1–10

Read together : Luke 15: 1-10

you might read this twice

What phrases, words or ideas have caught your attention? Share these with the group

The God Who Searches and Rejoices

- Jesus is criticised for eating with "sinners" - his hospitality becomes scandal.
- The shepherd risks leaving ninety-nine to find one.
- The woman turns her house upside down to recover a single coin.
- Both call neighbours to celebrate - salvation is shared joy.

God is not distant but searching, carrying, and rejoicing. Repentance here is not self-striving but allowing oneself to be found.

Reading based on The Woman and the Lost Coin (Luke 15:8–10)

You may think it's only a coin. Small. Ordinary. Hardly worth the fuss. But to me, it was everything. A tenth of what I had. A day's food. Security for tomorrow. It slipped away, rolled into the dust, vanished into the shadows of my house.

I would not rest. I lit the lamp. I swept every corner. My neighbours heard me muttering, "Where is it? Where is it?" They must have thought me mad - scouring the floor for a single coin.

But I could not stop. Something inside me knew: this one matters.

And when I found it - oh, the joy! I called my friends, my neighbours. "Come and rejoice with me! What was lost is found!" We laughed, we clapped, we sang. One small coin, but it was not small to me. That's what God is like. Searching, sweeping, refusing to give up until the lost one is found. That's what heaven is like - joy spilling over when even one life is restored.

But not everyone rejoices. Some stand outside the door, arms folded, lips tight. "Why bother? Why waste such effort on one? Why celebrate them? They brought it on themselves." They grumble, like those Pharisees who wagged their heads at Jesus for eating with the wrong sort of people. And I ask you, which side are you on? Do you grumble at the scandal of God's mercy, or do you join the dance of heaven?

Because here's the truth: in God's eyes, no one is expendable. Not one life is too small. And when the lost are restored, the only fitting response is joy. So, will you stand outside and complain, or will you come in and rejoice with me?

Question:

Who today are treated as "sinners" or outsiders, and what would it look like for the church to risk scandal by welcoming them to the table?